

## Press Room



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### **California Launches Aggressive DUI Crackdown Over Holidays** More than 310 Law Enforcement Agencies Taking Part Statewide

**Sacramento, Calif.**– If you're the designated driver in the coming weeks, the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), California Highway Patrol (CHP) and more than 310 law enforcement agencies throughout California hope you'll consider a "COPTail" as your drink of choice. Not sure what's in a 'COPTail'? You guessed it. Think bubbly, sweet or sour, but think alcohol-free.

Officers from the greater Sacramento area joined the California Highway Patrol to serve the non-alcoholic drinks or "COPTails" to lunch patrons at Fat City Bar & Cafe in Old Sacramento today as part of California's Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month.

"COPTails may be fun and festive, but we're deadly serious about drunk driving," said CHP Commissioner D.O. "Spike" Helmick. "That's why the Highway Patrol is working with hundreds of law enforcement agencies across the state to conduct regional DUI checkpoints over the next few weeks. And our officers are highly trained and they know just what to look for. No joke."

California has experienced a 32 percent increase in the number of people killed in alcohol-involved collisions since 1998. The year 2002 marks the fourth consecutive year that alcohol-related fatalities have increased after more than a decade of decline

"We're not taking this trend lightly," said OTS Acting Director, Christopher Murphy. "We know that one of the most effective ways to deter drunk driving is through sobriety checkpoints. We know they work. Period. And California is providing support and resources to 25 regional 'Avoid' programs, encompassing more than 310 law enforcement agencies. They will be out there."

In 2002, 1,416 people were killed and more than 32,000 injured in alcohol-related crashes – up from 1,308 deaths and 31,806 injuries in 2001.

The complimentary "COPTails" were provided courtesy of Fat City Bar & Cafe and the California Automobile Association's Cheers! program. Additional "COPTails" events will be held in the Bay Area, Central Valley, Los Angeles and San Diego areas over the next two weeks.

*\*Statistics are based on California Highway Patrol provisional 2001 and 2002 data.*